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SOME GOOD INTENTIONS  
AND A BLUNDER  
JOHN OLIVER HOBBS

MERRIAM'S  
VIOLET  
SERIES



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"AND I, M' LADY, AM HER HUSBAND." *Page 9.*



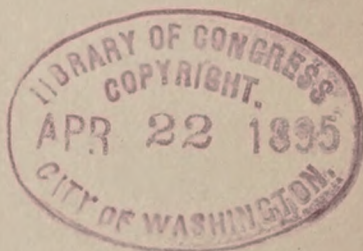
# Some Good Intentions

AND A BLUNDER

BY  
*Pearl M.T.P. Craigie*  
JOHN OLIVER HOBBS *psend*

Author of "A Bundle of Life"

ILLUSTRATED



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NEW YORK  
THE MERRIAM COMPANY  
67 FIFTH AVENUE

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**NEW YORK**



# SOME GOOD INTENTIONS AND A BLUNDER.

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## CHAPTER I.

“THE pheasants were scorched to the bone,” said Lady Boyd Hopjay. “Looking back upon the soup, I can recall nothing but paste ornaments and hot salt water. Can you supply me with a reason?” She looked at Timpany, her butler, and waited a reply.

“The shortcomin’s m’ lady halludes to,” said Timpany after a pause, “might be hascribed to Mrs. Timpany’s having had what vulgar persons call a upset.”

"The cellar stairs or the laundry ladder?" inquired his mistress. "I told her she was too shortsighted for the one and too heavy for the other, and that she was to send one of the undermaids. But if people persist in neglecting warnings given for their good, they must take the consequences."

"The upset, m' lady," said Timpany, "was moral, not physical. I meant, m' lady, that Mrs. Timpany was out of temper. It is a less uncommon occurrence, m' lady, than I could wish, or you would suppose."

"You confound me," returned Lady Boyd Hopjay. "Mrs. Timpany has been in my service as cook for eight years, and I have always found her of a most equable disposition."

"With m' lady's pardon," rejoined



Timpany, "Mrs. Timpany has been in your ladyship's service for eight years as cook, but only one year in mine as Mrs. Timpany. During the twelve-month she has manifested the possession of what I should respectfully beg leave to be allowed to call griding and grizzling proclivities."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Lady Boyd Hopjay. "I am her mistress and ought to know."

"And I, m' lady," retorted Timpany, "am her husband." Respect for his employer curtailed the sentence. "She cried into the soup and nagged over the birds. She's always doing one or the other."

"One would have imagined," said his mistress, "when an excellent cook and an experienced butler entered into



matrimony that such a union was appointed by Providence."

"Your ladyship brought it about," said Timpany, without any consciousness that the retort might convey an uncomplimentary second meaning.

"And *yet*," said Lady Boyd Hopjay, awfully, "your domestic differences darken my kitchen and cast a blight upon every dish that comes to table—upon an evening, too, when the Archbishop is dining here. Send your wife up to me in twenty minutes."

Timpany bowed over his high necktie and retired, but turned at the door. "I feel sure, m' lady, that your ladyship has too much justice to be prejudiced by any remarks made by Mrs. Timpany, whose temper is still on the simmer," he began.

"If any one prejudices me, that person will be yourself," returned Lady Boyd Hopjay equably.

"Thank you, m' lady. For if interfering to prevent, as is but my duty, an under-housemaid—whose good looks should not be weighed in the balance against her, she naturally not being able to help them—from being overrode——"

"You can go," said Lady Boyd Hopjay.

By this time you have realized that Timpany's mistress shared to an extraordinary degree in that weakness common to many estimable and charming women who have not found in marriage the alpha and omega of earthly bliss. For years ere the Indian liver of



General Sir Boyd Hopjay, K. C. S. I., beckoned that gallant soldier to an English vault she had ridden her hobby. She rode it still, and, to do her justice, she was past-mistress of that kind of equitation. It was her pride to point to a married couple and say, "That man and woman would never have dreamed of taking one another for better or worse had it not been for me." Whether the man and woman were grateful or not made no difference. Her chosen vocation in life was to marry people, and she fulfilled it. Like David, she reckoned up her victims by tens of thousands. The census had swollen at her bidding, and the records of the divorce court bore witness to the fact that many of those whom she had disinterestedly aided to become one



flesh had cheerfully availed themselves of the surgical assistance afforded by the law in becoming two again.

But Lady Boyd Hopjay never lost faith. Backslidings grieved her, ingratitude gave her pain, but she clung to her tenets, and went on delivering her evangel, and receiving fresh converts into the ranks of the married year by year and month by month.

"You look a little worried, dear," said Lady Ali Bhye, rustling into tea. Lady Ali, as all the world knows, was the celebrated beauty, Miss Fann, who married Chief-Justice the Hon. Ali Mahadeva Govind Bhye, of the High Court of Judicature, Bombay; an immensely wealthy Hindu gentleman, who renounced Mohammedanism with all its privileges when the English belle

dropped into his dusky arms, but, it is whispered, returned later to the faith of the Prophet.

“Has anything been going wrong?”

Lady Boyd Hopjay crumpled her eyebrows, always exquisitely drawn, and sighed.

“Timpany and his wife have been quarrelling.”

“Your cook and butler? Nuisance! By the way, you made that match.”

“They were excellently suited in every respect——”

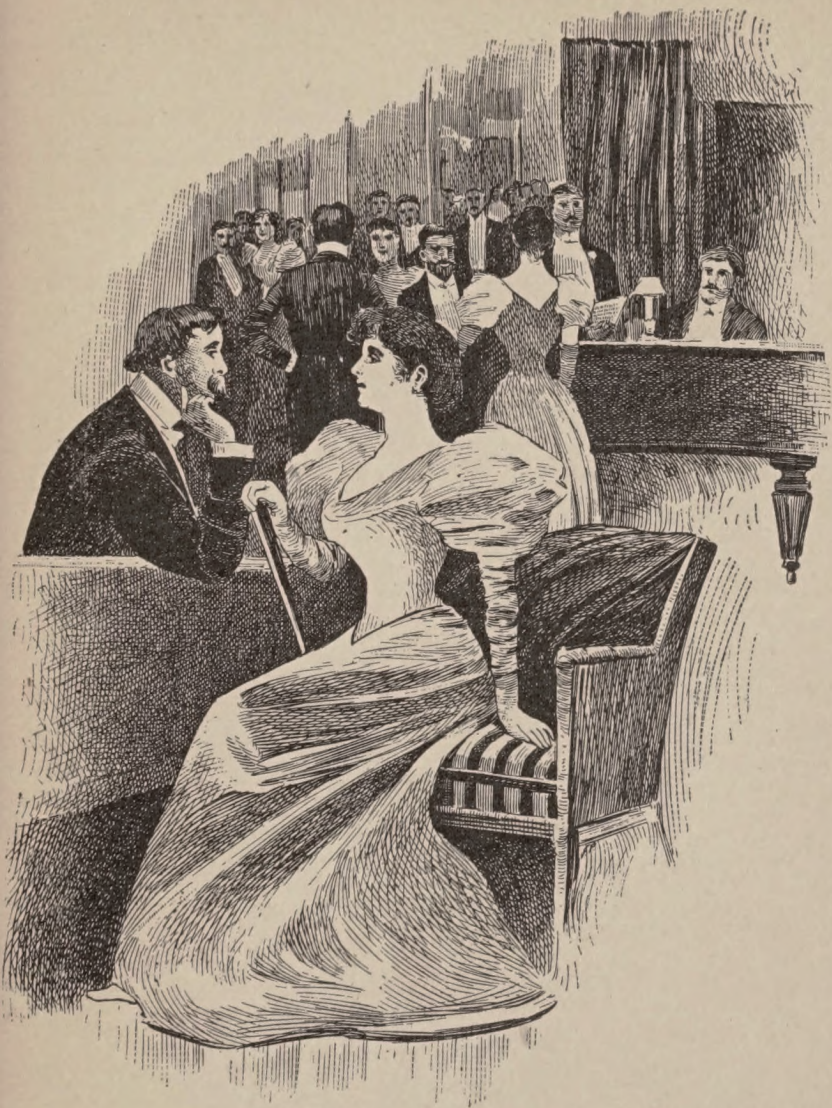
“But one. Now——”

“She cries into the soup, and Timpany’s plate no longer does him credit.”

“Why can’t they take different situations?”

“My dear Clara! whom He hath joined——”





“ THEN YOUR IDEAL WOULD BE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN  
WITH A SQUINT ? ” *Page 25.*





“Let no man—— Of course! But it generally is a woman who does the putting asunder. By the way, don't expect me at Stokehole on the first. By that date I shall be on my way to the East, per P. & O.”

“You are going out to Ali?”

“No. I have gathered, from reliable sources, that he is coming home to me. Therefore I take the opportunity, denied to me at other times, of renewing my acquaintance with the land of my adoption. We shall pass each other in the Red Sea. Don't groan, you dear thing! I would not

“‘Unknot the ravelled past’

if the chance were given me. When I married, I didn't marry Ali. I went to the altar with a jointure of £8,000 a

year, five rows of Oriental pearls, and a parure of emeralds big enough and beautiful enough to make empresses die of envy. I have slept with the pearls round my neck ever since, and when things look blue I take out the emeralds and they are green—the color of Hope once more. By the way, do go to the Pontarlet reception to-night! You like sensations, and there will be one there. She is Scotch, red-haired, quite raw, young, an heiress, and quite beautiful. Egg has christened her ‘The Northern Light.’

“I have heard of Mr. Egg as one of the latest university comets which have appeared on the literary horizon.”

“You should read his essays. He dissects life, love, religion, ethics, art, and society; minces small, and serves



up in little *plâts* of a page or two with seasoning."

"Is he a reformer?"

"Dear, no! He holds that absolute wickedness is as beautiful in its way as absolute goodness, just as the *alto rilievo* possesses its own charm, distinct and separate from the *basso*."

"One of the 'Decadent' school, I suppose. Unpleasant person!"

"You wrong him. He has nothing in common with the author of the 'Fêtes Galantes.' 'Morality, for the sake of morality,' is one of the texts he preaches from oftenest. But you will meet."

The prophecy was fulfilled. That night at the Pontarlet's, in the slight stir and bustle which heralded a movement to the piano on the part of the *diva* of the season and her accompanist, the

hostess paused for a moment before Lady Boyd Hopjay's chair, smiled, and, bending her long neck this way and that, passed on. Then a tall, slight man, in exceedingly loose clothes, drooped over one of Lady Boyd's still handsome shoulders, and murmured—

“Privileged to meet you.”

She answered in kind, and said that the rooms were hot.

“So I gather by the way the fans are pitching and tossing, like ships on a troubled sea.”

“Or a Bengal palm grove in a hurricane.”

“You know the East?”

“Well; and you?”

“By heart.”

“Ah! you have travelled much in Asia?”



“Never in the flesh; in spirit, yes.”

Lady Boyd Hopjay began to suspect that this must be one of the English Theosophists—a Mahatma from St. John’s Wood, probably. Under cover of her large fan she gave a little disgusted shudder. For her, society was divided into two classes—people whom it was desirable to know and be known by, and people whom it was best to keep at arm’s length. Professed followers of the occult were in the latter category.

But the conversation dropped around them, and the *diva* sang the wonderful bird-like aria of *Nedda* in “I Pagliacci.”

“You applaud,” said Lady Boyd Hopjay, when it was ended. “You appreciate Leoncavallo?”

“As a trout appreciates real flies

after dinner on an angler's imitations of fur and feathers. The man is essentially modern; that is his charm! He and Mascagni are the pioneers of the new lyric school, dramatic, picturesque, subtle—impressionistic, in a word."

"But will their works live?"

"Dear lady, the writer who writes, the painter who paints, the composer who composes, for posterity, forge fetters for future generations."

Lady Boyd began to think she had got hold of a musical critic.

But the programme of the evening included a recitation.

"'The Stars' Secret: the Honorable Glenalva Auchterlony,'" she read from a page of white and gold.

"The Scotch heiress; I know her aunt, the Duchess of Claveboisie. So Miss



Auchterlony recites. Does she do it well? I have never yet heard her."

"Then I can promise you a new sensation. I am never tired of hearing her."

The phrase had something of familiar in the ears of the lady who listened.

"She has dramatic talent?"

"None whatever."

"Then the sensation you promise is the reverse of pleasurable?"

"Exactly. If you have any artistic insight, any appreciation of *plastik*, any critical capability for the enjoyment of elocutionary sonorities and cadences, you will suffer acutely, as I do."

"But you said that you were never tired of hearing her."

"No more am I—because the torture she causes me to undergo is in itself

a perfect thing—by reason of its completeness.” The loosely clad man threw back his head, folded his hands, and narrowed his lids to the chink of intent observation as the young lady commenced. The recitation ended amid applause.

Lady Boyd began to realize that she was wrong in not knowing exactly who this personage was. But the young lady snatched her eyes.

“What tints! what contour!” she murmured underneath her lifted *pince-nez*.

“Perfect as a pink pearl.”

“But ah! what an accent!”

“Recently imported from north of the Tweed. To me that Caledonian burr is invaluable. It is the ‘feather’ in the diamond.”



"Most people prefer their diamonds without feathers."

"Not so I. Contrast heightens charm. A regret lends exquisiteness to the subtlety of artistic joy."

"Then your ideal would be a beautiful woman with a squint?"

"Ah, thank you. To be so comprehended gives one hope. One has not lived in vain, or written vainly."

"I think"—it was more a thought thinking itself than the utterance of a conjecture—"that you must be Mr. Egg?"

He bowed gratifiedly.

"At your service."

. . . . .

The crowd parted. The tall red-haired young lady who had enlisted the fastidious suffrages of Egg was borne

toward them upon a sea of masculine compliments. He raised his finely marked eyebrows as he heard.

“Appreciative criticisms are crystalized violets. These coarsely indiscriminating expressions of approval are——”

“Candied peel and French plums.”

“Dear Lady Boyd Hopjay, we must know one another better.”

It did not strike her as an impertinence, coming from the source it owned. But just then Viscount Pontarlet presented a young lady.

“Miss Auchterlony, Lady Boyd Hopjay.”

“I’m just glad,” said the red-haired young lady who had recited, “to have the opportunity of meeting. I have an uncle who will be talking about Lady





AS A WHEEL TOUCHED THE BRINK EGG LEAPED OUT.

*Page 34.*





Boyd Hopjay all day long. Colonel Auchterlony, of the Imperial Hussars. And he knew your ladyship in India."

Lady Boyd Hopjay warmed under her pearl powder. The red moustache that had muffled whispered vows of eternal devotion at moonlight picnics and morning rides rose again flamboyant in her mind's eye. The niece's beauty had prepossessed her, the association with the past rendered her attractive. She took the gloved hand—rather a large one—and looked at her with mellow interest.

The Honorable Glenalva Auchterlony grew suddenly pink. Her brave, straightforward blue eyes fell. She had encountered the intent dark gaze of Egg, who leaned against a porphyry pillar supporting a basket of

trailing orchids, with his arms folded and his loosely clothed legs crossed. If he was impertinent, there was a certain *cachet* in his way of doing things, and he was distinguished, successful, certainly a person whom it was desirable to know.

As Lady Boyd Hopjay's glance travelled from one to the other, her familiar spirit made a suggestion in her ear. Her master passion leapt into a blaze; her pet hobby trotted up and knelt for its mistress to mount it. She all but uttered the word aloud—

“I must marry these two people!”



## CHAPTER II.

So she asked them down to Stokehole for September.

It was a select house-party, including the Archbishop and several married couples of Lady Boyd Hopjay's own making. There were the Anerleys, and the DeGrewsomes—there would have been Lady Ali Bhye and her connubial chains of pearls, but that she was on her way to Bombay, because the Chief-Justice was on his to London. There was a pretty little *ingénue* with an elderly aunt, who wrote society novels; there was a vapid young peer, Lord Dudley Haymarsh, upon whom, in the interest of the *ingénue*, the hostess had

benevolent designs; and there were two or three stray guardsmen to fill up chinks and keep things going. There were also, as I have intimated, Glenalva Auchterlony and Egg.

Lady Boyd Hopjay, in furtherance of her aim, encouraged her visitors to take fresh air and Norfolk scenery in couples, as the animals came out of Noah's ark. To that end she kept many dogcarts and pony carriages. No chaperon of any dignity would stoop, she shrewdly guessed, to occupy the back seat of the former kind of conveyance, or the front seat of the other. A groom was the most effective guardian of the proprieties—out driving.

Egg did not shoot. It was his pride to do none of the things that ordinary men did. Upon the second noon, after



lunch, Lady Boyd suggested that he should drive Miss Auchterlony over to Sieveking.

“The plan is charming,” said he, “but needs one change in the programme to make it perfect. Let Miss Auchterlony drive me. To be swiftly carried through an exquisite landscape at the guiding will of a beautiful woman—what could be more enjoyable?” He conveyed again that impression of saying something quite inoffensively that would have sounded impertinent from another man.

He had taken it for granted that she could drive—and he was not mistaken. She had a firm hand, and a masterly mode of handling the whip. The cob in harness owned a prejudice against threshing-machines, and passing by a

brickyard while one of those red and blue spiders was in motion, shied, jibbed, and refused to go on. The owner of the machine, seeing the difficulty, offered to have the engine stopped, but Miss Auchterlony positively refused.

"No, I thank you," said she, tightening her lips. "It is ridiculous, the giving in to a beast like that. He *shall* pass it, if I keep him here all day."

The result was a tussle. The dog-cart backed toward a ditch with green slime in it. As a wheel touched the brink Egg leaped out, but rather awkwardly.

"Oh, no, I will not have you lead him by the bridle!" cried Glenalva, plying whip and rein. But Egg had held no



such intention. He walked to a neighboring stile, dusted the upper step with his pocket handkerchief, sat down, folded his arms, and regarded the spectacle with cool artistic appreciation. The struggle ended in victory for the holder of the whip: the cob went on, and Egg got in again.

"Superb!" he said. "Feminine will *versus* brute force. You have given me a capital subject for another essay."

"I suppose literary people sometimes will be very hard up for something to write about," Glenalva remarked.

Egg shuddered.

"The common herd, who grow dirty bread out of muddy brains, perhaps. The writer whose vocation is writing, pure and simple, will wait months, years, until he finds a subject worthy

to be adorned by his art, glorified by his genius, and given to the world."

"And the editors will be using bad language while they are waiting," suggested his companion; "and his wife will be coming to complain that there are no joints for dinner."

"Do I look," said Egg coldly, "like a man who was employed by editors, who had a wife, and who fed upon joints?"

She turned the blue jewels of her glance upon him for an instant, and then looked back at the cob's ears.

"Indeed I think you do not," she answered.

"You are an exquisite aggregation of contrasts," said Egg, regaining his equanimity; "the perfectly beautiful body——"



"Mr. Egg!" Glenalva turned as red as her superb hair.

"The purely divine physical conditions informed by a mind tinctured—you will pardon me—with earthly grossness."

"I am very much obliged," said she.

"Now you are offended," Egg remarked, "when I would not, if I could, have you changed for the world. You delight me. I drink you in. I bathe in you continually."

The groom behind coughed. Glenalva whipped up the cob, who instantly bolted. After fifteen exciting minutes the lodge gates of Sieveking raced into view. The cob came to a standstill under a clump of beeches. They alighted, passed in between rampant heraldic monsters, and walked up the

broad avenue together, between hedges of immemorial yew.

"I do not care much about houses," said Glenalva. "I would prefer to walk round the gardens, if you do not mind going by yourself."

Egg would not hear of leaving her.

The Sieveking gardens consisted of a huge central enclosure from which radiated twelve smaller, one for each month of the year. All the flowers immortalized in the verses of the Elizabethan poets bloomed at Sieveking, in their proper season, grown from seeds carefully treasured by generations of skilful gardeners. Here might be seen stocks and sweetwilliams four feet high, gigantic sunflowers and hollyhocks, and Brobdingnagian marigolds, larkspurs and carnations, and striped



cabbage roses that might have bloomed upon insteps of Tudor shoes, with the five-leaved York and Lancaster flowers, that have shed their white and red petals over many a page of history.

The garden seemed to give Miss Auchterlony pleasure. She walked about until she was tired, and then sat down on a moss-grown bench under a gnarled acacia, where a stone bulldog had kept guard for nearly three centuries past. She pulled off her glove, and patted his weather-worn head.

"Times have changed with you, you poor old fellow," she said in her Scotch voice, "since you used to watch Anne Boylen walking in the morning, with her kirtle pinned up out of the dew—

“ ‘ To pluck sweet seteywall,  
The honeysuckle, the harlock;  
The lily and the lady-smock,  
To deck her summer hall.’

“Do I quote badly, Mr. Egg?” Egg had shuddered, and she had seen him.

“Infamously. But,” as she reddened fiercely, and looked at him full, opening her blue eyes and expanding her nostrils, “it would be all wrong if you did it right. You are you, and your faults are a part of you. Even your physical personal defects render you more unspeakably precious to the seeing eye. A very clever woman—you know her—said to me not long ago, ‘Mr. Egg, your ideal of perfection is a beautiful girl with a cast in her eye—a squinting goddess!’ She spoke the truth!”

Miss Auchterlony’s delicate skin was





THEN SAT DOWN ON A MOSS-GROWN BENCH.

*Page 39.*





now one flame. If she could have burnt him with the indignant fires of her eyes, I think she could have seen him frizzle cheerfully. The emotion under which she labored contracted the orbital muscles, the defect which Egg's enthusiasm had lauded as a charm was at once and obviously apparent. What she would have said she did not utter. She turned away and left the garden, Egg following her languidly. Walking swiftly down the yew avenue she passed the gates, outside which the groom waited with the trap. She mounted to the driver's seat, snatched the reins and drove away. The groom with professional alertness bounded to his seat behind, but Egg was forced to run some little distance before he could even gain the vantage of the step. He hated run-

ning. The journey home was performed in silence.

"Did you enjoy your drive?" asked Lady Boyd Hopjay that night, looking maternally in upon Glenalva in her dressing-room.

"Oh, yes, Lady Boyd Hopjay, I enjoyed the drive," Glenalva answered.

Lady Boyd Hopjay knew how to approach a subject delicately. No collector with a tin box and a butterfly net was ever more cautious in approaching a specimen.

"And the cob? Prince Prigio sometimes gives trouble."

"He was for kicking his capers, but I was there with the whip," said Glenalva bluntly.

"And your companion? You were an envied girl. To tread those historic



alleys, to stroll through those wonderful rooms, with Mr. Egg. He was very gifted and subtle?"

"He was very afraid when the cob was nearly backing the trap into a green ditch. He jumped out," said Glenalva.

"Perhaps he is nervous. These high-strung natures sometimes are."

"Oh, no, he is not nervous! He told me to my face that I had a mind tinctured with earthly grossness, and that I quoted verses infamously, and that one of my eyes does not look quite straight; and you will see that this last remark is the most insulting of all, because there is"—she lifted her eyes—"some truth in it."

"My dear, you confound me. Did he say all these things, really?"

“Oh, yes, and worse. He said that delighted him, and he drank me in and bathed in me, and my moral and personal defects made me all the more unspeakably precious.”

Ah—h—h! I thought so. My dear, you have made a conquest. One of the most brilliant minds of the day. And he positively adores you.”

“Well, then, all I can say is”—Glenalva threw back her long, tawny tresses of hair over one superb shoulder—“it was a very” (she pronounced very “varry,” and was “wass”) “queer way he had of showing it. Good-night, Lady Boyd Hopjay.



### CHAPTER III.

“You are attracted,” said Lady Boyd Hopjay. “It is patent to the most observing.”

“I will admit that something in her beckons to something in me,” said Egg. He leaned against the mantelpiece—Indian wood and heavily carved; and his brown suit and umber tie were in harmony. He stroked, or rather pressed, back his fine, silky hair—there was not much of it, but what there was, was beautifully arranged—with a white hand upon which an engraved sapphire shone darkly. In his buttonhole was the petalless calyx of a rose. It might have

been the emblem of his creed of beauty in unloveliness.

"She is very young," said Lady Boyd Hopjay, smiling mellowly, "and rather *farouche*. You puzzle her: she admits it frankly."

"Bewilderment is the first phase," said Egg. "Then comes curiosity, increased with the first trembling of the star-sown veil to a panting desire to know, to understand. Then, and not till then, the delirium of bedazzlement which accompanies the full revelation, when every sense throbs in unison with the choral strophes, and the charmed vision drinks in the glory of the goddess."

After this conversation Glenalva found herself a little shunned by the male portion of the company, for



Lady Boyd Hopjay had whispered here and there, without intending to establish a real fact, any more than the original author of the tale of the Three Black Crows:

“He is very much attracted. And she? You know the beginning is bewilderment. But I hope for the lifting of the veil. And they are eminently suited to each other.”

So other men fought shy, and Glenalva was thrown more and more into the society of Egg.

“Are you writing anything just now?” she asked him once, in the conservatory.

“I am making a story,” said Egg.

“For——” she was going to ask for what magazine or paper, but remembered that she did not care, and stopped short.

"For you and me," he answered.

"Oh!" Glenalva said, feeling that she ought to be grateful. "What is it about?"

"About us both," said Egg, narrowing his eyes and smiling inscrutably.

"Have you seen the Japanese passion-flower bloom?" asked Glenalva, turning a little awkwardly to the plant stands.

"I am more interested," said Egg, "in watching the unfolding of a soul."

"Indeed," said Glenalva, smothering a yawn. "I hope it is a nice soul."

"It has beauty," said Egg, "and ugliness, depth and shallowness, like any other soul. But it is yours; and when its petals expand"—he bent over her—"it will be mine."

"Oh!" said Glenalva, for the second time, but in quite another key.



“—Mine, to watch its development, to prune away its grosser growths, to glory in its graciousness, to breathe its perfume daily.” He bent over her; she fancied that his pale classical nose touched her hair.

“What does this mean?” she cried.

“Let us never ask, dearest,” whispered Egg, “what it means. It is a mystery. Hush!”

“Are you mad?” demanded Miss Auchterlony hotly.

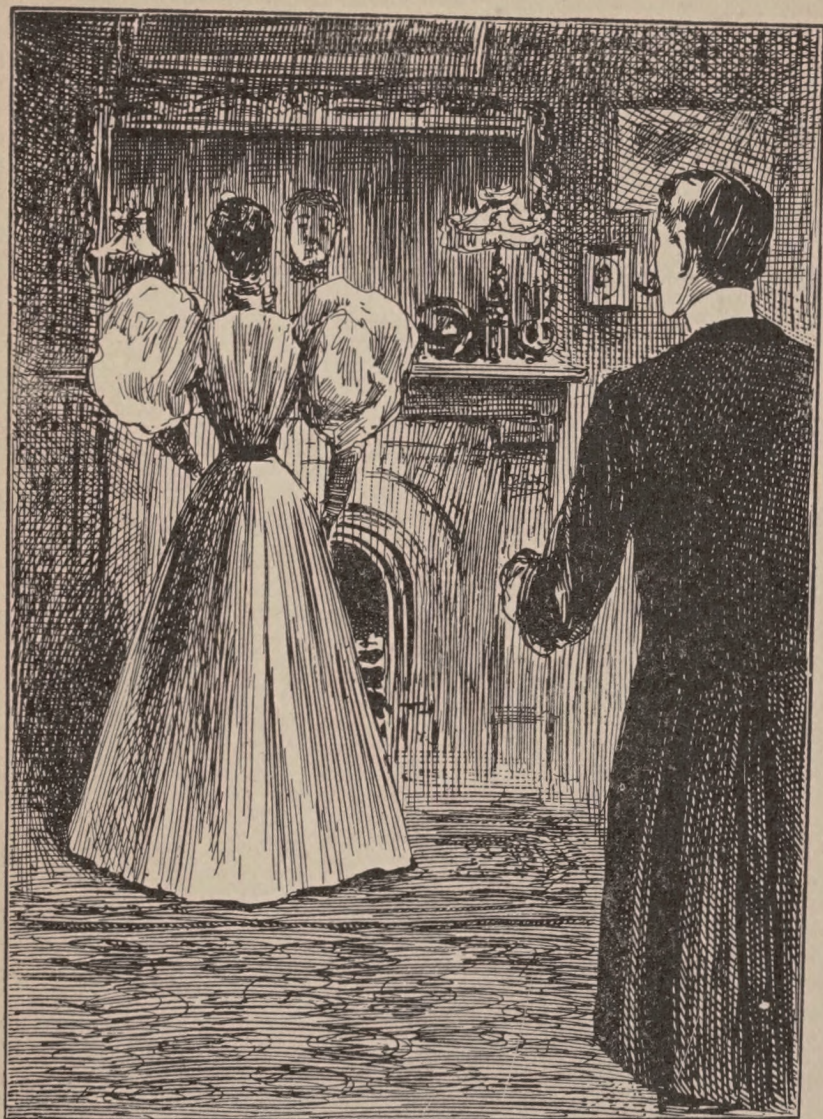
“Mine is a Bacchic frenzy,” murmured Egg. “I have drunk of the wine of life, and it mantles in the blood and fires the brain.”

His lips touched hers. Miss Auchterlony uttered a vigorous expression of anger and disdain, and thrust him strenuously from her as she recoiled, turned,

and fled. There was a sound of cracking and rending, a rumbling avalanche of flower-pots, a crashing of glass. Egg had collapsed amid the horticultural glories of Lady Boyd Hopjay's conservatory.

He appeared at dinner with a strip of black court-plaster decorating his pale forehead, and several scratches upon the backs of his white hands. There was an incursion of outside guests, and Egg and Miss Auchterlony did not neighbor one another at table. Her burning cheeks and disturbed avoidance of him, however, were remarked. It was all over the house, and had leaped out into the country by luncheon on the following day, that the Scotch heiress and the gifted English critic, poet, and essayist were engaged.





SHE TURNED AWAY AND PRETENDED TO BE LOOKING  
AT A PICTURE OVER THE FIREPLACE. *Page 61.*





Lady Boyd Hopjay surprised Glenalva by drawing her aside and kissing her on the brow with exulting solemnity.

"You are a dear, natural girl. This is what I have hoped—almost prayed for. And you have a prize such as seldom falls to the lot of woman. He is so brilliant, so incisive, original, full of lofty thought, redolent of culture."

"Who?"

"Shy child!" She tapped the bewildered girl upon the chin.

"I shall never understand English people," thought Glenalva. "They do not talk plainly, but play hide-and-seek with you in corners." Then a sudden unpleasant recollection occurred to her, and she said: "Lady Boyd Hopjay, I would be sorry to make a complaint, but one of the gentlemen staying in this

house has behaved very badly. We were looking at the Japanese passion-flower in the conservatory, and he talked very strangely, and came very near, and at last he had the impertinence to kiss me. And I knocked him in among the flower-pots, and I am afraid he was hurt; but he behaved very badly, all the same."

"You piece of nature!" Lady Boyd Hopjay embraced her with a gush of delight. "We must tell *him* this."

"Him?"

"I like that little instinct of concealment. And we keep apart and try to look haughty when he draws near. But the veil has been uplifted—a little way. Is it not so? You darling!"

"These English men and women are all mad!" thought poor Glenalva as she



escaped, "and I wish I were back with my aunt at Clamboisie."

Her aunt must have heard from Lady Boyd Hopjay, for within a few days she received a letter from her.

"I am given to understand," the Duchess wrote, "that you have formed an attachment for a certain Egg. Of course he is a dazzling personage, and I can understand a girl's infatuation; but you are not yet your own mistress. And let me advise you to make no decision affecting your future life in a hurry. I will say no more, only that I think an old and affectionate relative might have been admitted at first hand into her niece's confidence."

"Everybody is mad," said Glenalva when she had finished, "and I shall be going mad myself, if something does

not happen, now I know what everybody has been thinking of all along. Oh, this man! this hateful man! It is all his doing, and I must do something!"

She drummed upon a pane of the drawing-room window, looking out at the night, the velvet-palled garden, and the shining stars. It was after dinner, and the ladies gathered round the piano, were trickling out their little songs and waltzes, while the men yet delayed their longed-for entrance from the dining-room.

"Do not look at that star so much, my dear; I cannot give it you."

She recognized the voice, though not the quotation, and turned.

"Mr. Egg," she said in low, plain tones, "I wish to speak to you."



“ ‘ Appoint the spot,  
And there beneath the cold rays of the moon,  
Or the sere boughs of sunburned forest oak,  
I will await thee. ’ ”

“ It shall be in none of those places,”  
said Glenalva, feeling how useless her  
dignity was, “ but in the billiard-room.”

She marched off. Those who had  
seen but not overheard the colloquy  
exchanged looks of intelligence.

“ A tryst,” murmured Lady Boyd  
Hopjay, as Egg, shedding a slow smile  
upon her, drifted gently away.

. . . . , . . . .

“ You have behaved dreadfully, and  
not like a gentleman; but you can undo  
what you have done, and I will forgive  
you for that, if ever I can. You have  
put things wrong, and Lady Boyd Hop-

jay has helped you; and now you must put things right. What do you shake your head at? Oh!" cried Glenalva, "is it possible that you refuse?"

"I refuse to render back," said Egg, "the priceless gift that you have given me. This is the wild primeval instinct. The viking's daughter valued not the lover who did not claim her against her will and take her by strength of arm." He smiled a rather ugly smile. "I have already shed blood in your service, my red-white queen."

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket and caught her left hand. Before she could wrench it free a diamond half-hoop was slipped over the tip of the third finger and forced down to the fork. Then the door closed behind him. He had gone.



Glenalva tore off the ring. Being a woman, she looked at the diamonds before she threw them away. They were good ones. Inside on the hand were engraved the simple words: "Glenalva, from Arthur. September, 1893."

With those hideously juxtaposed words branded on the ornament, she could not leave it lying on the floor; she dropped it loathingly to the bottom of her pocket, and burst into tears. Somebody came into the room, and she turned away and pretended to be looking at a picture over the fireplace, but the chimney-glass betrayed her grief.

"Miss Auchterlony! I beg your pardon, but is there anything the matter?"

The speaker was a young guardsman

to whom she had scarcely spoken. She knew that his name was Saville, and that he came of literary parentage.

"Nothing," she said inconsequently, trying to stifle her sobs. Then she added inconsequently that she wished she was dead.

"Forgive me," said Saville; "but I have an idea that—that—that Mr. Egg has been unkind to you. Of course, under the circumstances, I have no right to interfere."

"There are no circumstances!" Glenalva cried. "Why does everybody persist in pretending that I am engaged to that man—when I hate him—hate him—hate him!"

"So do I," said Saville; "and he hates me because of my name. My father reviews his books in *The Sixth-Day*



*Review.* Won't you tell me what he has done?"

Glenalva told him.

"H'm! I see," said Saville. "The whole thing is a 'rush.'"

"Indeed I should not care for that," said Glenalva, who was not an adept at slang, "but for the things people will be saying. He has behaved worse than abominably. Ah!" she cried, "there ought to be a man to beat him."

"There shall be," cried Saville, taking fire at her, "if I may be the man!"

. . . . .  
"A moment, Mr. Egg."

"How lightly," smiled Egg, "people ask for a moment out of each other's lives. Why, a whole æon of joy or anguish may be contained in a moment."

"What kind of experience this partic-

ular moment contains for you will solely depend upon your own behavior, said the youth, who had derived certain verbal felicities from his parentage. "Lady Boyd Hopjay, may I beg you, on the behalf of Miss Auchterlony, to remain?"

The scene took place in the morning-room directly after breakfast.

"You ask me," said Egg calmly, "to acknowledge that I have behaved like a scoundrel and a cur. We are all scoundrels and curs at times. I do not boast to be superior to my fellows. But as to giving up this lady, it is out of the question. She is mine—my wife."

"Your wife!" echoed Saville.

"His wife?" cried Glenalva indignantly. "Never!"

"My wife by the law of fitness and



the affinity of souls!" said Egg calmly. His sapphire gleamed as he pointed to Glenalva. "Her being has been spiritually merged in mine. Thoughts, cherub smiling thoughts, have been born of the amalgamation of our intellects——"

He stopped, because Saville strode toward him. Lady Boyd Hopjay screamed. Egg drew back abruptly.

"Do not let us degrade ourselves by a crude manifestation of brute instinct," he said rather hurriedly. "Let me reflect a moment."

"Not a moment!" said Saville. Apologize to the lady and leave the house, or stay and take what I have got for you."

"I go!"

Egg turned to Glenalva.

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“Do not think that I blame you,” he said mellowly. “You acted as you have acted because you could not do otherwise. What has been was to be, and could not have been otherwise. The glow and glory of your nature drew mine, as the height and clarity, the intense spiritual vitality of mine attracted you. But what has been is no more. The time has been very precious. I have known perfect joy through you. I have tasted perfect suffering through you again.”

“Do you mean when I knocked you in among the flower-pots?” burst out Glenalva.

Saville roared, but Egg had contrived to make his exit. Lady Boyd Hopjay burst into tears. She had set her mind upon marrying him.



It was she who married him, after all. As for Glenalva, she chose to throw herself away upon a lieutenant in the guards. The Duchess was furious. Life is made up of good intentions and blunders such as these.

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